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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/820,400

04/08/2004

Gulseppe Cavalli

TRW (ASG) 7058

8468

26294

7590

08/22/2006

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EXAMINER

JOHNSON, VICKY A

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3682

DATE MAILED: 08/22/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/820,400	Applicant(s) CAVALLI ET AL.	
	Examiner Vicky A. Johnson	Art Unit 3682	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 July 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 4 and 5 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 and 6-11 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Applicant's election without traverse of Group I Figures 1-3 and 6 in the reply filed on July 12, 2006 is acknowledged.
2. Claims 4 and 5 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected species, there being no allowable generic or linking claim.

Priority

3. Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

4. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

5. Claims 1-3 and 6-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 1, it is unclear how the deformation directions are defined on the steering wheel.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

6. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

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(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

7. Claims 1, 3 and 6-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Zeller (US 3,331,260).

Zeller discloses a vehicle steering wheel comprising: a steering wheel rim (1) having a skeleton (2), several predetermined deformation zones (3) with predetermined deformation directions (any direction), and a rigid wood casing (4,5) surrounding said skeleton (2), said wood casing (4,5) having an inner side (see Fig 1) facing said skeleton (24), a deformation space (between 4, 5 and 2) being provided in said deformation direction (any direction) between said inner side of said wood casing (4, 5) facing said skeleton (2) and said skeleton (2) in said predetermined deformation zones (3), said deformation space (between 4, 5 and 2) being greater than a space between said inner side of said wood casing (4,5) and said skeleton (2) in radial direction (R) in other zones (see Fig 1).

Re claim 3, wherein said wood casing (4,5) surrounds a ring-shaped chamber (between 4, 5 and 2) in which said skeleton (2) is arranged.

Re claim 6, wherein said ring-shaped chamber (between 4, 5 and 2) has an oval periphery perpendicular to a rotational axis of said steering wheel (see Fig 1).

Re claim 7, wherein a diameter of said ring-shaped chamber (between 4, 5 and 2), measured in radial direction of said steering wheel varies along a circumference of said wood casing (4,5) situated perpendicular to a rotational axis of said steering wheel (see Fig 1).

Re claim 8, wherein said diameter of said ring-shaped chamber (between 4, 5 and 2) is greatest in said deformation zones (3).

Re claim 9, wherein between skeleton (2) and wood casing (4,5) at least one element (3) of a compressible material is arranged.

Re claim 10, wherein said wood casing (4,5) is composed of at least two shell parts.

Re claim 11, wherein said shell parts of said wood casing (4,5) are solid and a ring-shaped chamber (between 4, 5 and 2) taking up said skeleton (2) is formed by a milling out in said shell parts. Even though the product by process claims are limited by and defined by the process, determination of patentability is based on the product itself, therefore, the process of milling out has been given no patentable weight.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zeller (US 3,331,260).

Zeller discloses a steering wheel having a deformation space (between 4, 5 and 2) between said skeleton (2) and said inner side (26) of said wood casing (4,5), but

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does not disclose the steering wheel having the deformation space amounting to between 1 and 8 mm.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to determine an optimum range of between 1 and 8 mm, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233.

Conclusion

10. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

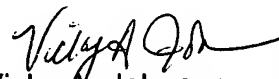
5,490,435	Famili	(steering wheel)
1,677,714	Frease	(deformation zones)
6,536,303	Fransioli et al	(steering wheel)
6,273,981	Mertes et al	(steering wheel)
6,038,770	Carrier	(steering wheel)

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Vicky A. Johnson whose telephone number is (571) 272-7106. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday (7:00a-3:30p).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Richard Ridley can be reached on (571) 272-6217. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


Vicky A. Johnson 8/20/06
Primary Examiner
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